

Supporting Teachers in Providing Effective Teaching Reading Literacy: Insights from Literature and Studies

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Abstract: *The purpose of this review of literature and studies is to gain insights to improve teaching reading literacy among teachers in the elementary school level. After an extensive review of available literature and studies seven themes emerged reflecting the insights gained.*

Keywords: Reading, Improve Teaching Reading, Reading Literacy

1. Introduction

This paper presents a comprehensive review of current global and local literature and studies to provide an understanding of what we know about teaching reading literacy. The presentations of the insights from the readings are organized using thematic approach. The identified and unifying themes are presented one after another and then a synthesis is made that provide the grounds to launch this specific study, and its justification.

The themes are: providing students frequent practice opportunities leads to significant gains in fluency; one way of teaching effectively reading literacy is through creation of home reading program; teachers' knowledge on phonemic awareness is critical to teaching literacy; quality textbooks help develop students' ability to learn through reading; pupils who are unable to read in early grade will have difficulty reading in the future; literacy acquisition is influenced by orthographical, phonological, morphological, and sociolinguistics factors, and reading literacy is a foundation to academic success across all disciplines.

Providing Students Frequent Practice Opportunities Leads to Significant Gains in Fluency

The first is *providing students frequent practice opportunities leads to significant gains in fluency*. According to Morgan (2006) "when students are provided frequent opportunities to orally read text" (p.273), they make significant gains in fluency. Dudyach (2015) adds to this observation by arguing that "for students to be successful readers, they need to read; the more practice reading they have, the better they will get" (p.58).

Morgan, (2006) further argues that "repeated readings provide students with frequent opportunities to practice and increase their proficiency" (p.274). Other authors suggest that "repeated reading is effective because by reading the same passage over and over the number of word recognition errors decreases, reading speed increases, and oral reading

expression improves" (Roundy& Roundy, 2009, p.1103). Furthermore, the practice of daily repeated readings is an efficient way to produce substantial gains in fluency over a short period of time (Morgan, 2006, p.274).

One way of Teaching Effectively Reading Literacy is through Creation of Home Reading Program

The second is *one way of teaching effectively reading literacy is through creation of home reading program*. According to Dudyach, (2015) effective teaching reading literacy involves fostering the home-school connection and creating an open relationship between the teacher and the families to foster parental participation in school programs. Home reading program promotes reading at home and provides parents with the support that they need to make home reading a successful experience (Dudyach, 2015). For home reading to be effective, the teacher must provide parents easy-to-understand directives, academic support, and the necessary tools (Dudyach, 2015).

Teachers' Knowledge on Phonemic Awareness is Critical to Teaching Literacy

The third is *teachers' knowledge on phonemic awareness is critical to teaching literacy*. According to Mohammed and Amponsah, (2018) "many teachers have under-developed understanding of teaching literacy and have negative attitude towards teaching pupils reading strategies" (p.274). Lyon and Weiser (2009) further argue that "it is alarming that many education faculty members know little of the converging peer-reviewed research relevant to reading development and instruction, and it is equally disappointing that these educators are not familiar with the necessary concepts and skills that children must ultimately possess to achieve reading proficiency" (p.478).

It is also suggested that reading teachers need a working knowledge of the phonological system of English, including the ability to articulate, identify, count, and manipulate phonemes; an understanding that sounds and letters are separate entities; and an understanding of the importance of

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secure and accurate phonological representations for words in print (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009). Furthermore, Cunningham et al., (2009) argue that “teachers need the associated content knowledge to support children as they develop reading skills” (p.491).

Quality Textbooks Help Develop Students' Ability to Learn through Reading

The fourth is *quality textbooks help develop students' ability to learn through reading*. According to Gove and Cvelich, (2011) “children are poorly equipped with the most basic resources like the availability of reading books, both in school and in the home, is a critical component for learning to read” (p.16). Another observation from the author states that “pupils may have low reading ability due to school heads not availing the necessary course books for practice reading, lack of appropriate curriculum to help improve pupils reading abilities and classroom environments that are crowded and noisy for an appropriate teaching pedagogy to be fulfilled” (Mohammed & Amponsah, 2018, p.274).

It is also suggested that one way of encouraging the reading habit is by increasing the “volume of children’s playful, stimulating experiences with good books” (Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011, p.98). According to the authors, the reading material needs to be tailored to the level and interests of each child, so that the child’s reading ability improves and is used to learn other subjects (Mawadah & Pahamzah, 2020).

Pupils who are Unable to Read in Early Grade will have Difficulty Reading in the Future

The fifth is *pupils who are unable to read in early grade will have difficulty reading in the future*. According to Mawadah and Pahamzah, (2020) children who do not learn to read in the early grades have difficulty developing further skills, which are generally obtained by reading because they cannot understand written information, follow written instruction, or communicate well through writing, these children risk falling further behind than their peers who can read effectively in subsequent classes without intervention.

In another observation the author indicates that “much research shows that if a child struggles with reading by as early as Grade 2, he or she will continue to have reading problems into adulthood” (Moreau, 2014, p.2). This is also emphasized by Gove and Cvelich (2011) that “children who fail to learn to read in the first few grades of school are handicapped in later grades because they must absorb increasing amounts of instructional content in print form” (p.5).

Literacy Acquisition is Influenced by Orthographical, Phonological, Morphological, and Sociolinguistics Factors

The sixth is *literacy acquisition is influenced by orthographical, phonological, morphological, and sociolinguistics factors*. According to Brunette, Punjabi, Pouezevara, and Cumiskey, (2019) “language complexity is a strong predictor of reading achievement than socioeconomic factor” (p.4). The author also observes that “literacy acquisition can be influenced by orthographical (spelling), phonological (pronunciation), morphological (units of meaning), and sociolinguistics (exposure to literacy Reading achievement)” (Brunette et al., 2019, p.4).

Literacy acquisition through and sociolinguistics are manifested in word recognition skills in early reading acquisition and development (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009). Phonological awareness and the alphabetic principle are at the very foundation of learning to decode accurately and, later, how phonologic, orthographic, syntactic, and semantic knowledge lead to automatic and fluent reading which, in turn, leads to making meaning from text (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009).

Based on this logic, Dudych (2015) suggests specific strategies that teachers can use during instruction time to improve phonics skills: phonological awareness, phonics/decoding instruction, spelling instruction, vocabulary instruction, and morphological instruction (p.56). These components work together to increase students’ phonics skills during word study instruction (Dudych, 2015). In addition, Dudych (2015), suggests that effective teachers may use specific strategies in reading instruction time to engage, model, coach, and provide direct instruction that supports students in developing reading skills.

Reading Literacy is a Foundation to Academic Success Across All Disciplines

The seventh is *reading literacy is a foundation to academic success across all disciplines*. According to Horning, (2007) “reading across the curriculum is a foundation to address students' needs, to achieve instructional goals, and to prepare citizens for full participation in our democracy” (p.1). Calderon and Rivera (2020) they argue that students’ academic success is dependent on reading quality. “Students learn to use language to focus through problems, to communicate ideas coherently and clearly, to organize ideas and structure arguments, to extend their thinking and knowledge to encompass other perspectives and experience, to understand their own problem-solving and thinking processes as well as those of others, and to develop flexibility in representing and interpreting ideas” (Calderon & Rivera, 2020, p.179). Furthermore, the authors argue that effective teachers are needed to dramatically improve students’ reading performance (Calderon & Rivera, 2020).

Effective teachers are needed to dramatically improve students’ reading performance in this system. Therefore, teachers have to be properly trained in reading instruction. A generalist classroom teacher does not need to become a reading specialist in order to help her students understand what they read. Even a math or a science teacher may benefit from integrating reading and math or reading and science instruction in her classroom. With this, the teacher gets to create appropriate strategies to raise the levels of math and science literacy of her students and help them develop their meta-cognitive processes for approaching their performance tasks successfully. (Calderon & Rivera, 2020, p.182)

Synthesis

From this presentation of comprehensive review of current global and local literature and studies about teaching reading literacy, we have learned that the following are necessary: creation of home reading program; knowledge on phonemic awareness; quality textbooks; teachers ensure that all pupils

are able to read in early grade; addressing literacy acquisition factors; and reading literacy is a foundation to academic success across all disciplines.

2. Recommendations

Based on the insights presented in this study, the following are the basic recommendations to teachers and administrators needed for improving literacy acquisition of students.

- 1) Teachers must strive to address and to develop in their students orthographical, phonological, morphological, and sociolinguistics factors.
- 2) Teachers must enhance and upscale their knowledge on phonemic awareness.
- 3) The school administration and teachers must secure high quality textbooks that can help develop students' ability to learn through reading.
- 4) The teacher must create home reading program for students for effective reading.

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